

Cuba: Unresolved

By Roscoe Drummond

Time for New Action

WHEN John J. McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and all of the intelligence chiefs of the Pentagon combined are unable to convince the preparedness investigating sub-committee of the Senate that Soviet offensive weapons have been withdrawn from Cuba, something needs to be done about it.



Drummond

I believe that something can be done. Before attempting to suggest one course of action, I want to point up the Central findings of the Stennis committee and to examine whether these findings are supported by responsible, fair-minded men.

After taking exhaustive, serious testimony from the entire intelligence community of the Government, including State, Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, plus more than 70 nonofficial witnesses, the Senate committee unanimously concluded: "Strategic weapons may or may not be now in Cuba. We can reach no conclusion on this because of lack of evidence."

ALL OF THE WITNESSES and all of the testimony from the Administration said just the opposite—that strategic missiles and offensive weapons have been removed. But the Stennis committee was unpersuaded. It has grave doubts that it is true.

The committee has grave doubts not only because the evidence of withdrawal is inconclusive, but also because our own past surveillance had these serious shortcomings:

There were several "substantial errors" in evaluating the intelligence because top officials were "subjectively" convinced that the Soviets wouldn't try to put missiles in Cuba.

Not until long after their arrival, not until after the President had spoken on Oct. 22, did we confirm that Soviet ground combat battalions were in Cuba.

Even into late October we were more than 100 per cent off in our estimates of the number of Soviet personnel on the island.

There is inadequate information today on the number of Soviet troops leaving Cuba—and the number arriving. "Some sources estimate that as many as 40,000 Soviets are now in Cuba."

With these doubts in mind, the Senate committee reports as follows:

"To a man the intelligence chiefs stated that it is their opinion that all strategic missiles and bombers have been removed from Cuba. However, they readily admit that, in terms of absolutes, it is quite possible that offensive weapons remain on the island concealed in caves and otherwise. They also admitted that absolute assurance on this question can come from penetrating and continuing on-site inspection by reliable observers and that, based on skepticism, if nothing more, there is reason for grave concern about the matter."

WHEN A SENATE committee, reaching this conclusion, is predominantly manned by such able and objective people as Democratic Sens. John Stennis (Miss.), Stuart Symington (Mo.), Henry Jackson (Wash.) and Republican Sens. Leverett Saltonstall (Mass.) and Margaret Chase Smith (Maine), it cannot be ignored.

Why shouldn't President Kennedy renew his urgent exchanges with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to establish the on-site inspection which the Premier himself proposed?

If the offensive weapons have been removed—as stated—and if Soviet troops are to be withdrawn, as promised,

then on-site inspection should be welcome to Moscow.

Unless Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, in objecting to on-site inspection, is doing exactly what Moscow wants, he is now in no position to refuse to fulfill Khrushchev's promise to President Kennedy.

The time is opportune to reopen the inspection issue and to reopen it with urgency.

I think most Americans will agree with the Stennis committee's unanimous appeal:

"The entire Cuban problem, both military and political, should be accorded the highest priority by our governmental officials to the end that the evil threat which the Soviet occupation of Cuba represents will be eliminated at an early date."

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STENNIS